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EU Statement on Azerbaijan

The European Union is deeply concerned at the conduct of the security forces in choosing to use force to break up an opposition demonstration on 26 November which had been sanctioned by the authorities and agrees with the assessment of Ambassador Pavesi in this regard. The EU notes that the demonstrators were exercising their right to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. Representatives of EU Missions on the ground noted that the security forces gave no warning ahead of the use of force, and made no attempt to disperse the crowd peacefully.

The EU calls on the authorities of Azerbaijan urgently to carry out an investigation into the conduct of the security forces, and, where necessary, to take appropriate action.

The EU continues to call on all sides to exercise maximum restraint. The EU urges the authorities to create the conditions necessary for freedom of assembly and freedom of expression in conditions of safety. For their part, those exercising their fundamental freedoms should do so in accordance with the law.

The EU further notes that the Central Election Commission has now passed the results of the 6 November Parliamentary elections to the Constitutional Court. The EU is concerned that the appeals and complaints procedure has not yet fully resolved a number of complaints or reports of fraud. The EU urges the Azerbaijani authorities to take speedy action to do so and to take appropriate action against those who committed or instructed others to commit election fraud.

The EU will continue to follow the situation closely, including issues connected with upholding the right to freedom of assembly and expression. The EU encourages the OSCE Office in Baku to remain engaged.

The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Country Croatia¹, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

¹ Croatia continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process